

said, we maintain the equally vital and necessary role of the policy councils in setting program priorities, classroom activities, and personnel changes. We believe this careful balance will help ensure the continued integrity of the Head Start Program for years to come.

We recognize that a vast majority of the Head Start agencies provide high quality, comprehensive services for children in the Head Start Programs. However, the provisions in this bill will create an important incentive for programs to operate at their best and in the best interest of the children they serve.

I want to particularly note emphasis we have placed on the role of parents in Head Start Programs. It is vital to remember that this program provides services to children and their families. Parents provide valuable insight and experience as to what a Head Start Program should do for children. In fact, this legislation increases the presence of parents in Head Start Programs, strengthens services for families, and provides training and development opportunities for parents that do serve on the policy councils and governing bodies.

This legislation also increases the coordination, collaboration, and excellence of early childhood education and care programs. It enhances the role of the State director of Head Start collaboration to ensure that Head Start Programs are maximizing their potential by stretching dollars, promoting partnerships to meet State and local needs, and developing strategic plans to meet future and current goals. This legislation also allows each State to apply for funds to support a State advisory council on early care and education to conduct a statewide needs assessment, identify collaboration opportunities, and support additional data collection. Additional encouragement of coordination and collaboration will stretch Federal, State and local resources to provide additional resources to disadvantaged children across the country.

Finally, this legislation requires the Department of Health and Human Services to cease any further development or implementation of the National Reporting System. While I believe that the assessment of children in the Head Start Program is important, I believe that the assessment must be both age and developmentally appropriate. This legislation requires a review and update of the assessments, standards, and measures used in Head Start Programs by the Panel on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children of the National Academy of Sciences. Once the panel completes its recommendations, the Secretary is then allowed to revisit the issue of assessment in Head Start Programs.

The members of the HELP Committee, and in particular Senators ALEXANDER, KENNEDY, and DODD, have worked tirelessly on this legislation.

The final product before us today is a comprehensive and bipartisan reauthorization of the Head Start Program. I wish to thank Senators KENNEDY, ALEXANDER, and DODD and the other members of the committee for their assistance in moving this legislation to the floor. Passage of this legislation will ensure that low-income children are prepared not only for success in school but for later success in life.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff of members of the HELP Committee who have spent countless hours preparing this legislation for passage by the Senate. In particular I would like to thank Roberto Rodriguez with Senator KENNEDY, Catherine Hildum and Sharon Lewis with Senator DODD, David Cleary and Sarah Rittling with Senator ALEXANDER, and Beth Buehlmann and Lindsay Hunsicker of my staff.

It is my hope that our bipartisan efforts will continue to produce results as we move to final passage of this legislation and on to a conference committee with the House of Representatives. We must all work together to get a bipartisan product to President Bush for his signature as soon as possible.

#### DYSTONIA

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to call attention to a very serious, painful neurological disorder, dystonia, that affects many muscle groups simultaneously. We recently commemorated Dystonia Awareness Week and I would like to call further attention to this serious disorder.

Dystonia is a painful disorder characterized by powerful involuntary muscle spasms. The spasms cause twisting, repetitive muscle movements, sustained postural deformities, and debilitating physical ailments. Although most forms of dystonia cause no mental damage, people living with dystonia are often prisoners in their own bodies. Currently, no cure is known and available medical therapies can only superficially address the symptoms.

Approximately 50 percent of people with dystonia have a genetically inherited form whereas birth injury, physical trauma, exposure to certain medications, surgery, or stroke is the cause for the other 50 percent. Dystonia is not selective, occurring in all racial, ethnic, and age groups. It is significantly more common than Huntington's disease, muscular dystrophy, and Lou Gehrig's disease. Given the prevalence and dystonia's impact on so many Americans as well as the limited treatment options available, I am pleased to support the goals of Dystonia Awareness Week. The Dystonia Advocacy Coalition through the commemoration of Dystonia Awareness Week and several other outreach activities seeks to raise awareness of dystonia's impact on the quality of life of 300,000 people in North America.

I call on my colleagues to support increased funding for the National Insti-

tutes of Health to support needed advances in dystonia research. Research is needed to develop reliable tests to diagnose dystonia as well as access to new treatment options to improve the lives of people living with this terrible chronic disease. Until we can find a cure for dystonia, I respectfully ask my colleagues to make a prolonged commitment to the dystonia community that goes well beyond Dystonia Awareness Week.

#### ROBERT STURM

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an honest, humble and dedicated servant of the United States Senate who has decided to turn in his Senate badge and enter retirement. For over 33 years, Robert E. Sturm, has selflessly served the Senate in various positions. His humble beginnings can be traced to his first Senate position as a mail clerk for Senator Birch Bayh in 1974. Bob undoubtedly performed his duties in an exemplary fashion, for his Senate career continued in the offices of Senators Dick Clark, Donald Stewart and Russell B. Long. He eventually rose to the respected position of chief clerk of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, and has served in that capacity for five current U.S. Senators including Senator PATRICK LEAHY, Senator RICHARD LUGAR, Senator TOM HARKIN, Senator THAD COCHRAN, and myself. After enjoying a 33-year career in the United States Senate, I speak on behalf of all of those who have had the pleasure of serving with Bob when I say; your retirement is well deserved.

I would like to share with you all the uniqueness of Bob's character, kind spirit and devotion to his position as chief clerk. Whether addressing an intern or chairman of a Senate committee, Bob always displayed the same measured approach, graciousness, patience and understanding. Bob never hesitates to place the needs of others before his own. It is commonplace for Bob to spend late nights at work in preparation for farm bill mark ups, accommodate last minute travel requests from impatient Senators and staff alike, fly to the furthest reaches of our great Nation to set up hearings, or answer any procedural question with the temperance of a man who has not answered the question a thousand times before. Robert Sturm is that indispensable part of your staff upon whom you grow so reliant, you wonder how you will function in his absence.

Bob, while a patient and understanding man, is not shy about enforcing the rules of the Senate Agriculture Committee which he loves. Any visitor to a Senate hearing who attempted to open a newspaper during the hearing, spoke too loudly from the audience or attempted to pass out materials not reviewed and approved by Bob, knows how quick the wrath of Bob Sturm can be meted out. Similarly, Bob guarded